

7 October 1959

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Meeting with Mr. Conger, Deputy Chief of Protocol, State Department, Regarding Cornerstone Ceremony

STATINTL

1. [REDACTED] and I called at Mr. Conger's office (room 2166, New State Building) on Tuesday, 6 October, to inquire with respect to procedures and protocol in connection with the State Department cornerstone ceremony which took place last January. In his capacity as Deputy Chief of Protocol, Mr. Conger planned that ceremony and played an important role therein. Attached herewith is a narrative description of that ceremony, a copy of the State Department booklet which was distributed at that ceremony, a copy of the news release, and an invitation. The invitation is to be returned to Mr. Conger's office. Mr. Conger requested that we furnish him with our program, an invitation and any other published material for his files.

2. Mr. Conger reviewed his files and spent an hour answering our questions in regard to a large number of specific points. The items we discussed are summarized below by topic.

(a) Invitations. RSVP did not appear on the State invitation. State faced a problem different from ours and there was less uncertainty as to who would come to their ceremony because protocol required that a large number of identifiable officials would be required to come to their ceremony. With respect to the top level officials, for example cabinet members, we should find out with certainty who will be coming because a name tag should be provided for the chair each such person and his wife will occupy. If we specify RSVP with our invitations, it would be suitable to request a telephone response. If it is desired to cover the Diplomatic Corps, this can be done by an invitation to the Dean of the Diplomatic Corps, who is the Ambassador from Nicaragua.

i. Invitations should be addressed to "Mr. and Mrs." While a home address is preferred, an office address is suitable in all cases except for the top echelon.

ii. Envelopes should be handwritten; a single envelope is used.

iii. An invitation should go to the under secretary of each department as well as to the Secretary. A representative of each department should attend our ceremony. Invitations should go to the Secretary of the Board of Commissioners, District of Columbia Government, to representatives of organized labor, a representative of the American

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Institute of Architects, and the President of the Chesapeake and Potomac Telephone Company.

iv. It is impossible to estimate the number of acceptances to be anticipated. The State ceremony was held on a cold and disagreeable day in January; from 1500 invitations sent, about 950 acceptances were expected, and about 750 invitees came. Mr. Conger thought that we might expect some 400 acceptances if a total of about 1000 persons were invited.

(b) Seating. State Department provided 12 seats on the platform itself. Invited guests were seated in sections according to the precedence of their occupations. Mr. Conger will assist us in arranging these sections at a later date. Seats are not numbered specifically within sections, except that cabinet level officials are seated separately with name tags on individual chairs. Sections are prominently marked by printed cardboard signs on poles. A section of from 25 to 50 seats may be reserved for senior Agency personnel.

(c) Clergy. State invited three; the Episcopal Bishop of Washington gave the invocation; the Catholic Archbishop gave the benediction; Rabbi Gerstenfeld sat on the stand but took no part. Transportation should be provided to and from the ceremony for any clergy invited to take an official part.

(d) Trowel, Desk. State used George Washington's trowel borrowed from a local Masonic lodge. The contractor provided some half dozen ordinary trowels which were also used and which were given to selected dignitaries. State also borrowed Thomas Jefferson's writing desk from the Smithsonian Institution.

(e) Logistics

i. Heaters were provided to insure that the stand would be dry.

ii. The stand itself had rolled-down curtains on the sides in case of bad weather. The roof was a translucent plastic material with the front higher than the back. The roof was set quite high above the stand in order not to interfere with photographic coverage of the event. There was a drapery extending across the rear of the stand from top to bottom and a seal was the only ornament on the rear wall.

iii. Press and TV. A separate elevated stand was provided for press, radio and TV use. This was at one side of the main stand.

iv. The band was located at the other side of the main stand.

v. A restricted area for working personnel was provided near the main stand. Officials, laborers, PA system operators, etc., were permitted to come and go in this area. These people were identified by ribbons.

(f) Ushers. Mr. Conger said that it was impossible to have too many ushers. Ushers should be firmly instructed not to wander away from their assigned posts. Ushers should be assigned to relatively small areas and, if possible, they should be able to identify the people who are to be seated in their assigned areas.

(g) Parking. State provided reserved parking spaces with numbered tickets.

(h) Police Assistance. This was provided by the District of Columbia. In our case, I understand that the Virginia police have agreed to assist on our site. If the President uses the parkway, we may expect that Park Police would also be involved.

(i) Graphic Display. State erected several bulletin boards side by side at some distance from the main stand. Drawings and general information of interest were placed on these boards, including pictures of the building as it would look when completed.

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Assistant General Counsel

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Subject
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